

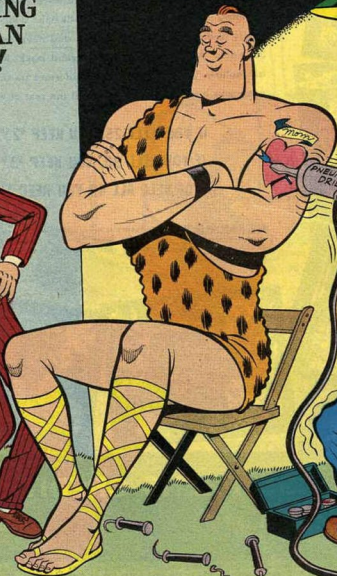
# The BARKER

**10¢**

**finds  
A TALKING  
DOG CAN  
BITE!**

**PROF. INKO,  
TATTOO ARTIST**

**TATTOOING  
NEATLY  
DONE**



*-GILL FOX-*





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## STEPHENS CREDIT SALES

Dept. F 80

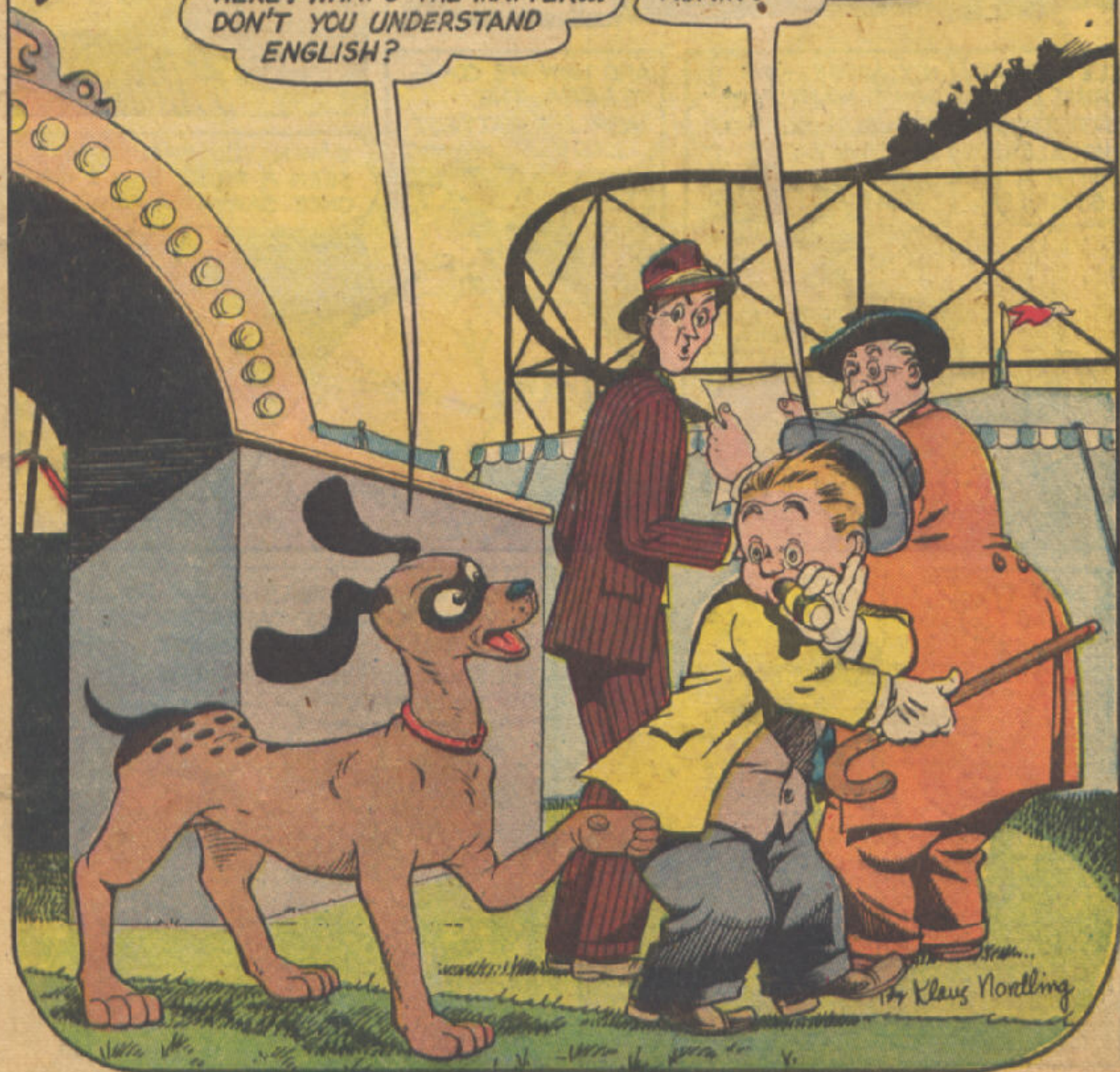
Normal, Illinois



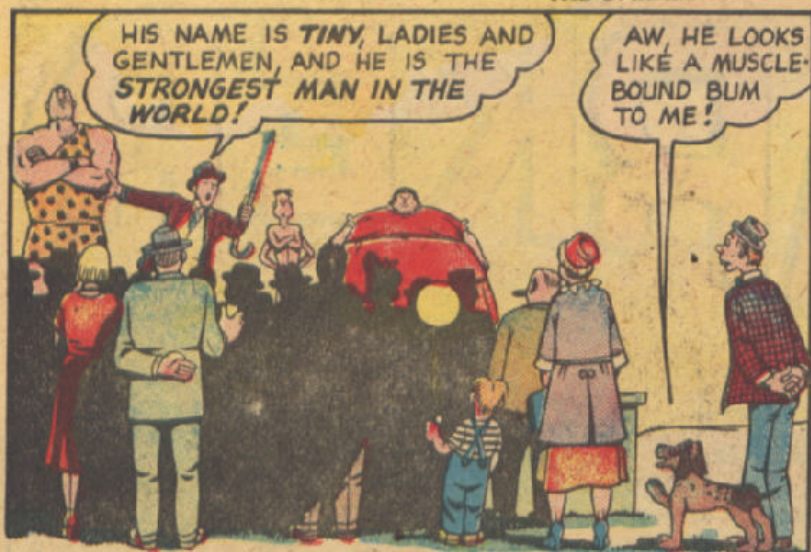
# THE BARKER

I SAID, WHERE DO I  
APPLY FOR A JOB AROUND  
HERE? WHAT'S THE MATTER...  
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND  
ENGLISH?

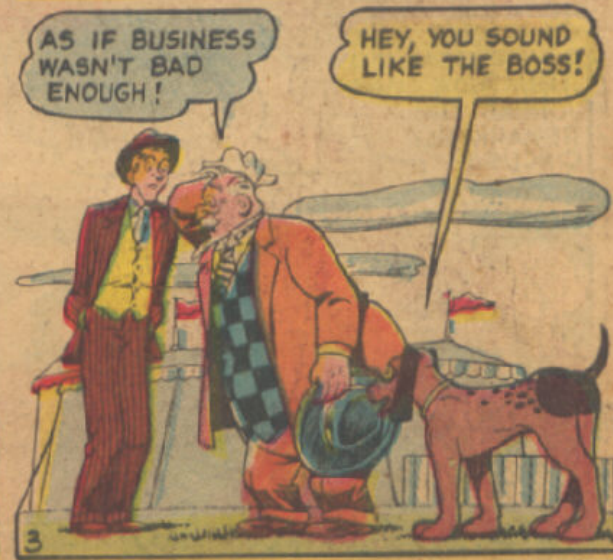
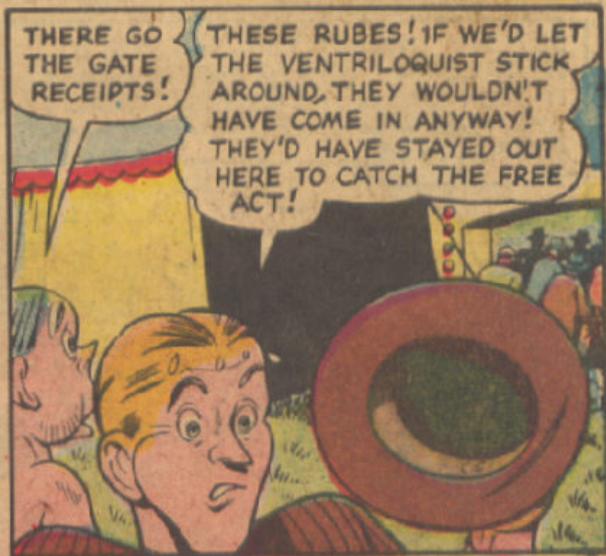
SURE I DO, BUT WHEN YOU  
SPEAK IT, I'VE GOT TO GET  
USED TO IT ALL OVER  
AGAIN!



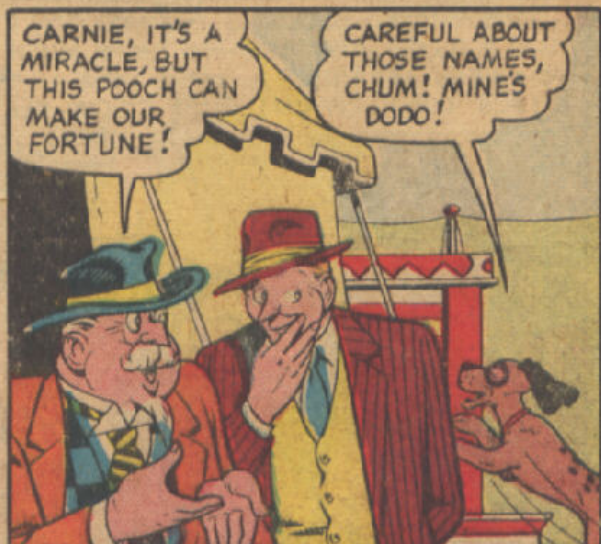




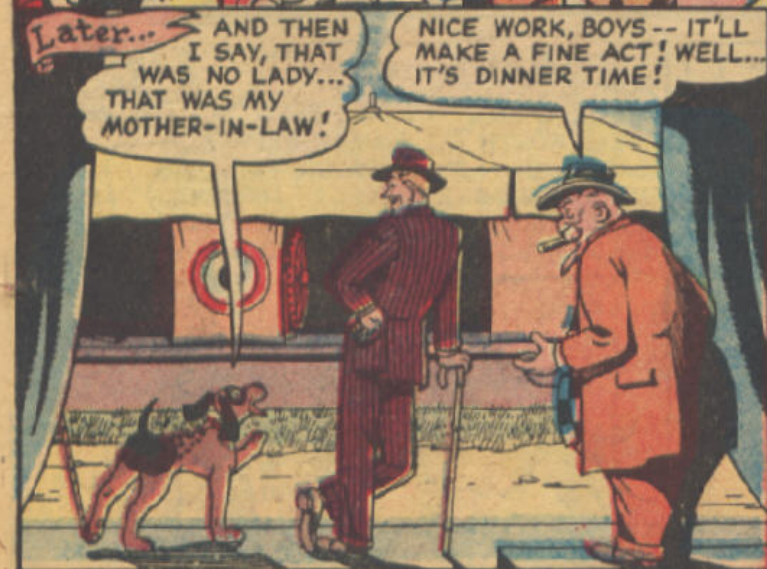




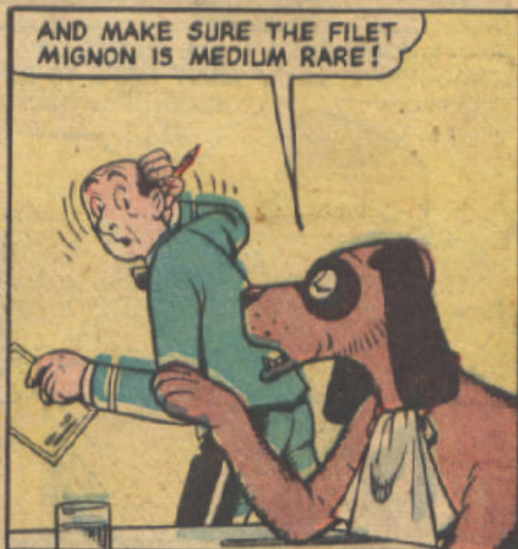












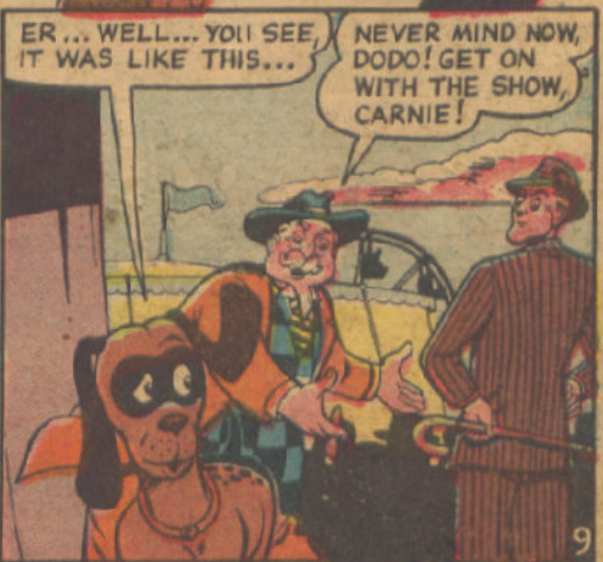
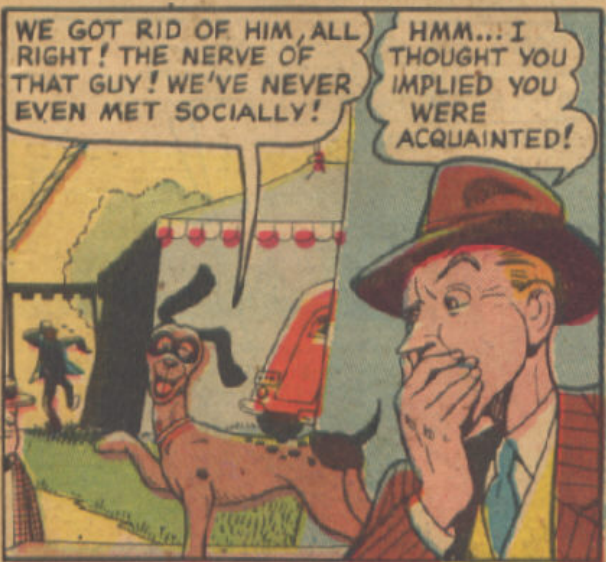










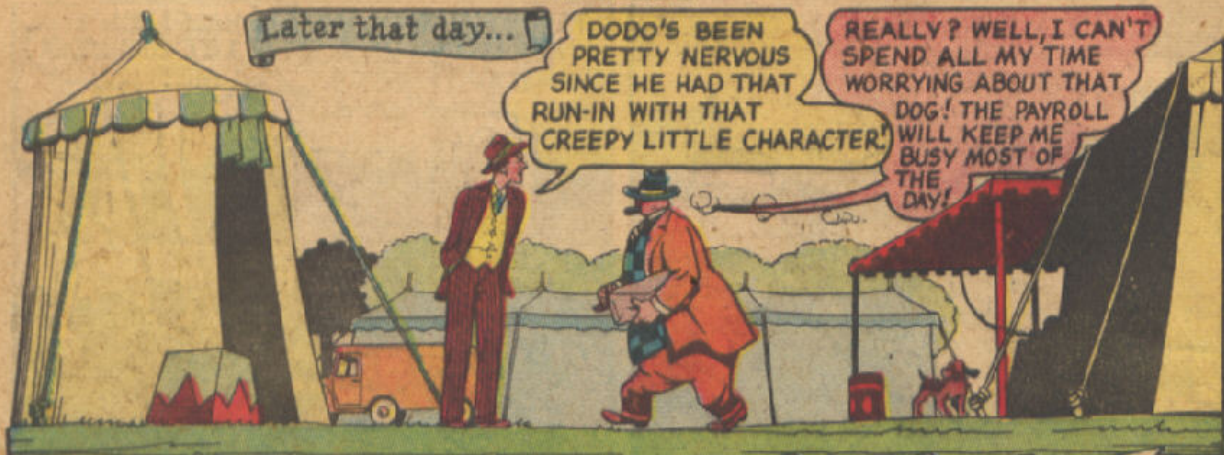




Later that day...

DODO'S BEEN PRETTY NERVOUS SINCE HE HAD THAT RUN-IN WITH THAT CREEPY LITTLE CHARACTER!

REALLY? WELL, I CAN'T SPEND ALL MY TIME WORRYING ABOUT THAT DOG! THE PAYROLL WILL KEEP ME BUSY MOST OF THE DAY!



THE PAYROLL! SHOULD BE A LOT OF DOUGH FOR A CIRCUS THIS BIG!

I'LL NEVER HAVE A MINUTE'S PEACE NOW THAT DOC'S FOUND ME HERE--- BEST THING TO DO IS GRAB WHAT I CAN AND TAKE A POWDER!

G R R R

OUCH! HALP!



IT'S THE COLONEL! I THOUGHT IT SOUNDED LIKE HIM!

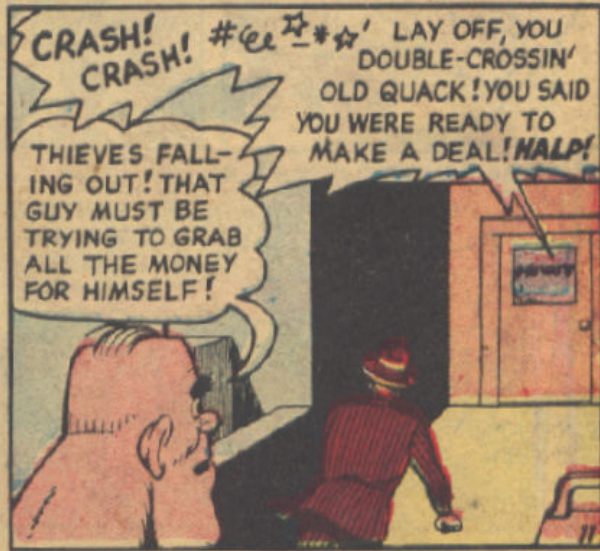
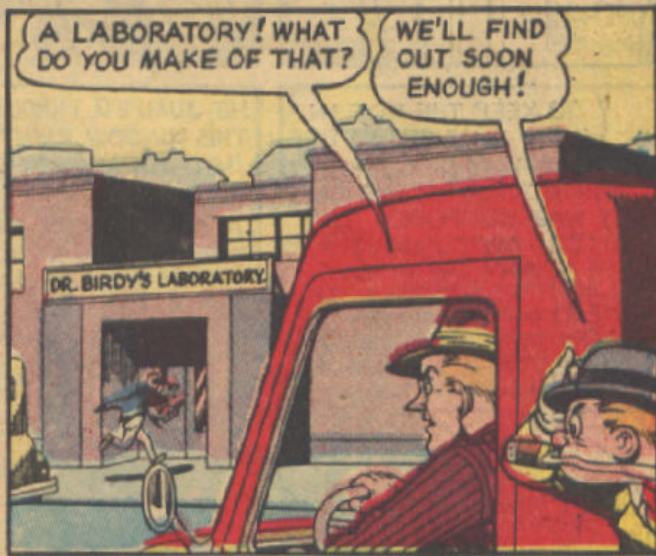
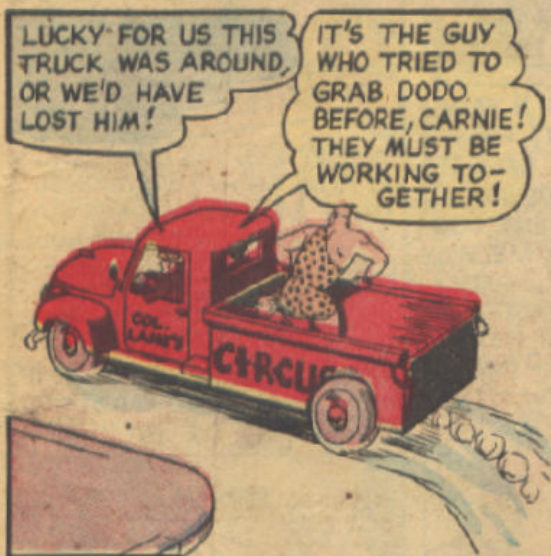
HALP!

DON'T BOTHER ABOUT ME! GET AFTER THAT DRATTED DOG! HE STOLE THE PAYROLL!

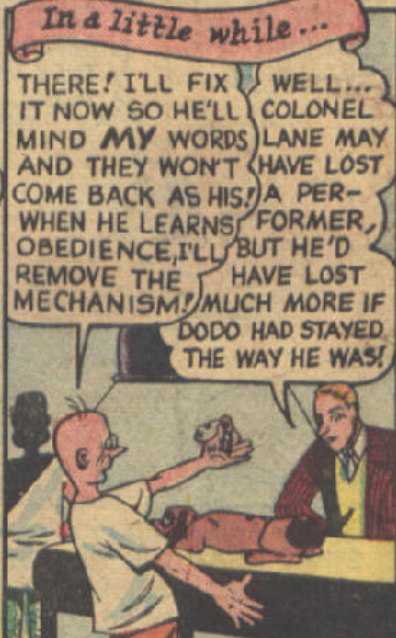
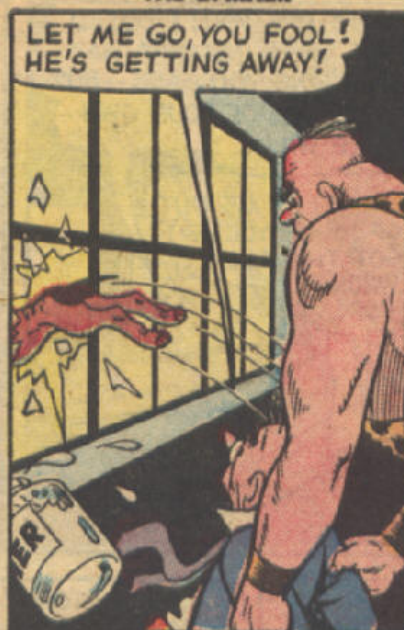
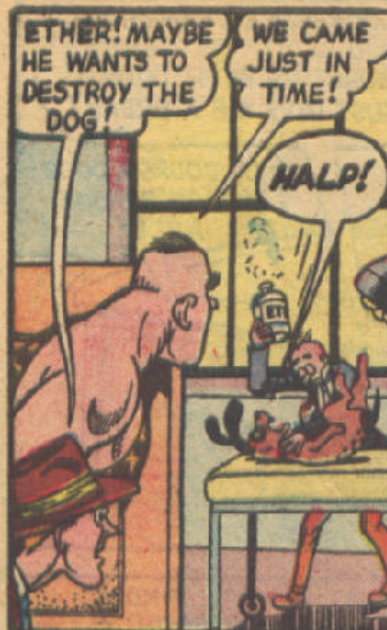
WHY THE NO-GOOD, THIEVING MUTT!











The following week, as Col. Lane interviews job applicants...





THE BARKER

# The Barker

DO YOU WANT A SYLPHLIKE  
SILHOUETTE ? THEN STEP RIGHT  
UP AND BUY A BOTTLE OF

**CONWAY'S  
REDUCING  
ELIXIR!**

NIX, LENA!  
WE LOVE YOU  
AS YOU ARE!



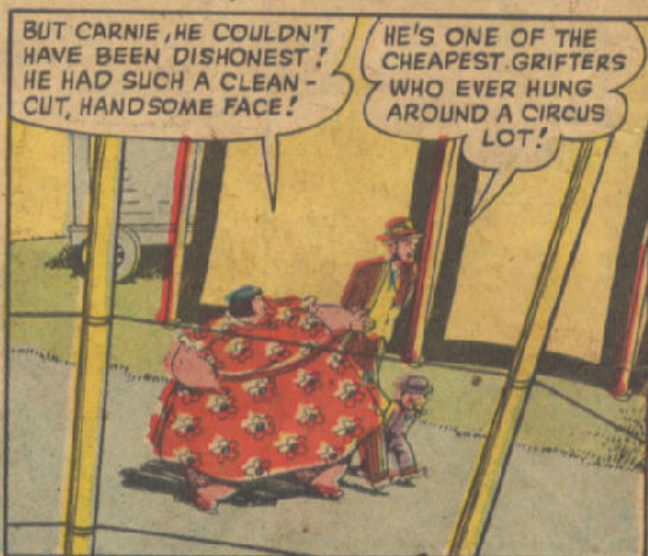








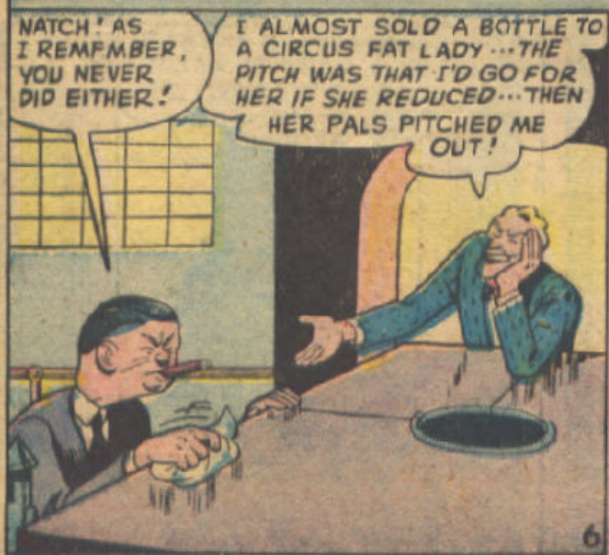
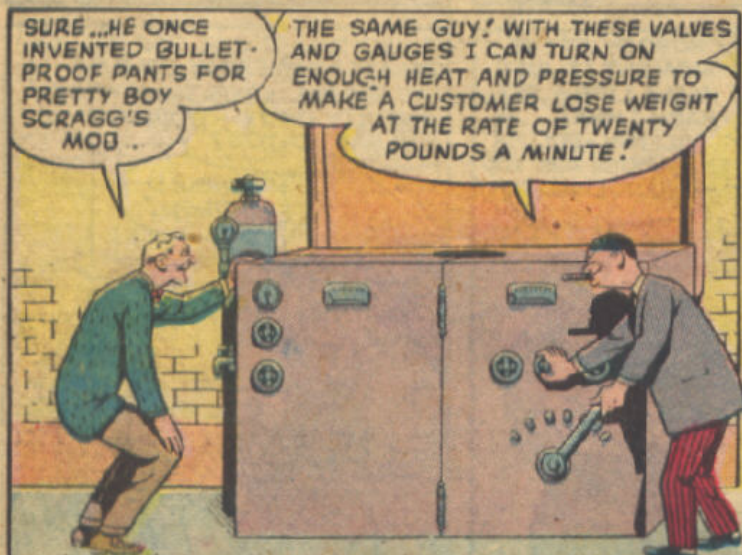






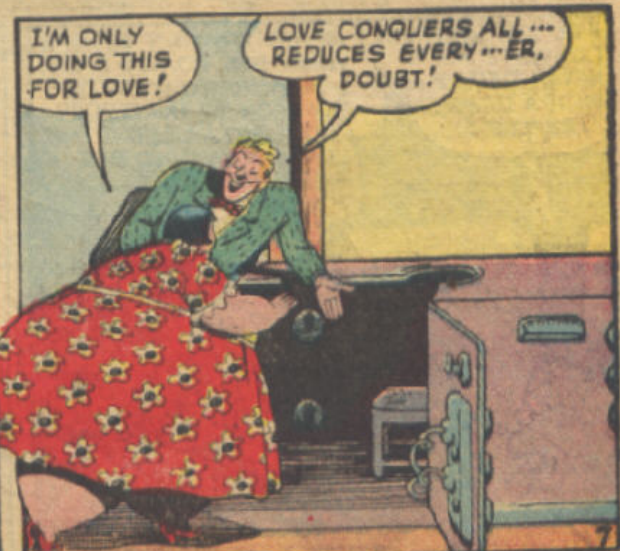
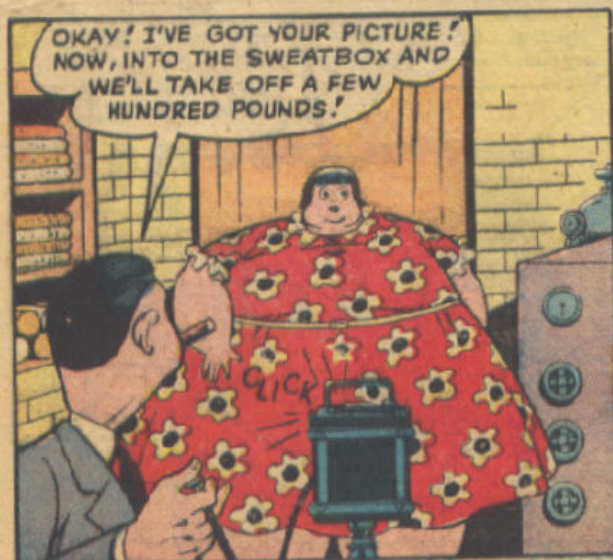




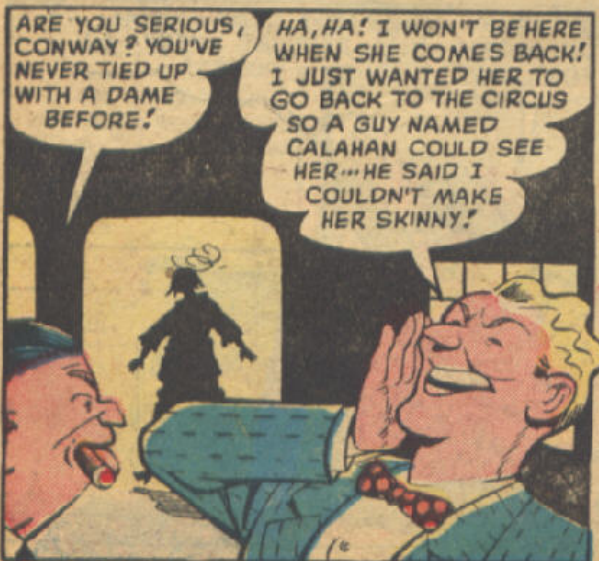
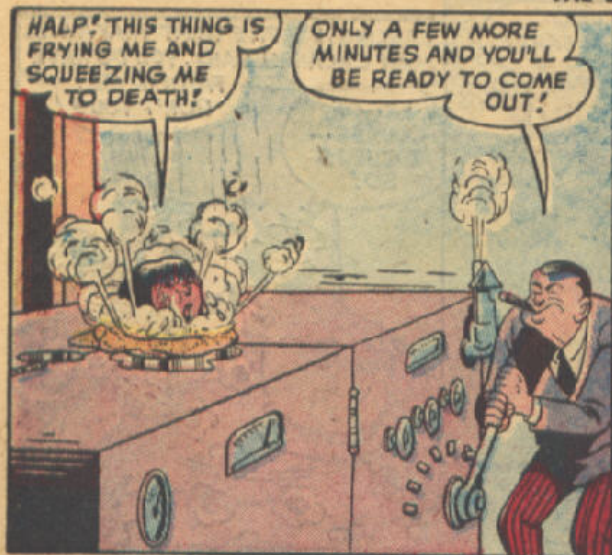




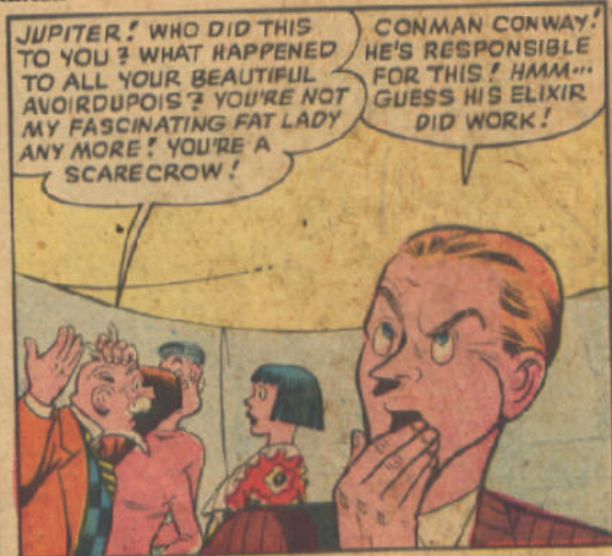
# THE BARKER















OH, THAT'S SWEET OF YOU, CARNIE!  
COME ON!

And, at at Tubbs' Turkish Baths...

NO SENSE IN YOUR  
LEAVING TOWN NOW,  
CONWAY! JUST HAND  
OUT THESE PICTURES TO  
ALL THE FAT PEOPLE IN  
TOWN AND I'LL CUT  
YOU IN ON THE TAKE!

ALL RIGHT! SO  
LONG AS YOU KEEP  
THAT FAT--I MEAN,  
THAT SKINNY DAME  
AWAY FROM ME  
WHEN SHE COMES  
AROUND! I DON'T  
WANT TO WIND UP  
MARRIED!



HOW INTEREST-  
ING! YOU MUST  
DEMONSTRATE  
IT FOR US, MR.  
CONWAY

NO! NO!  
NOT ME!

TSK, TSK!  
SHOULDN'T  
LOVERS BE  
BRAVE ...  
**BEFORE**  
AND AFTER!



DARLING, I'M READY! MY  
FRIENDS WANT TO SEE US  
OFF!

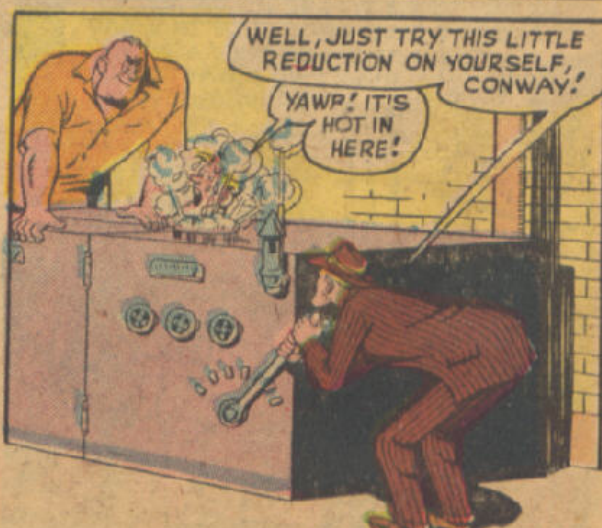
GULP! THEY LOOK  
PRETTY GRIM  
ABOUT IT, IF  
YOU ASK ME!

THERE'S THE THING  
THAT TOOK ALL  
THE WEIGHT OFF  
ME ... SLIMMED  
ME DOWN TO THE  
SIZE CONMAN  
ADMIRE!



I'LL PUT  
HIM IN!

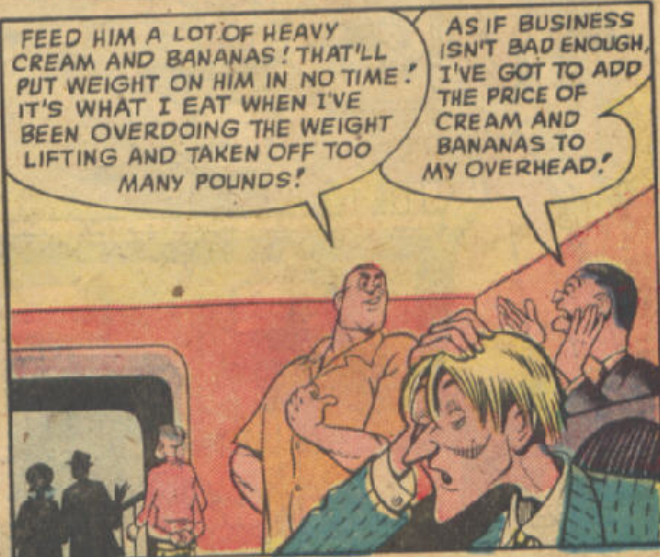
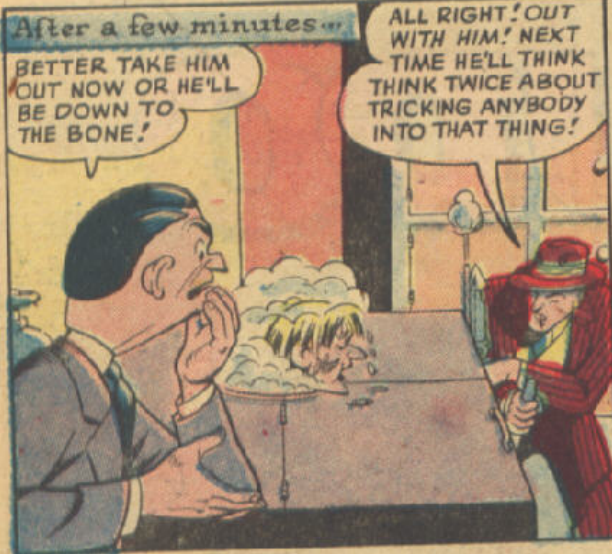
BUT I DON'T WANNA LOSE WEIGHT!  
IF A CONFESSION'LL SAVE ME,  
I DIDN'T CARE ABOUT LENA,  
EITHER! I JUST  
REDUCED HER TO GET  
EVEN WITH YOU  
GUYS!



WELL, JUST TRY THIS LITTLE  
REDUCTION ON YOURSELF,  
CONWAY!

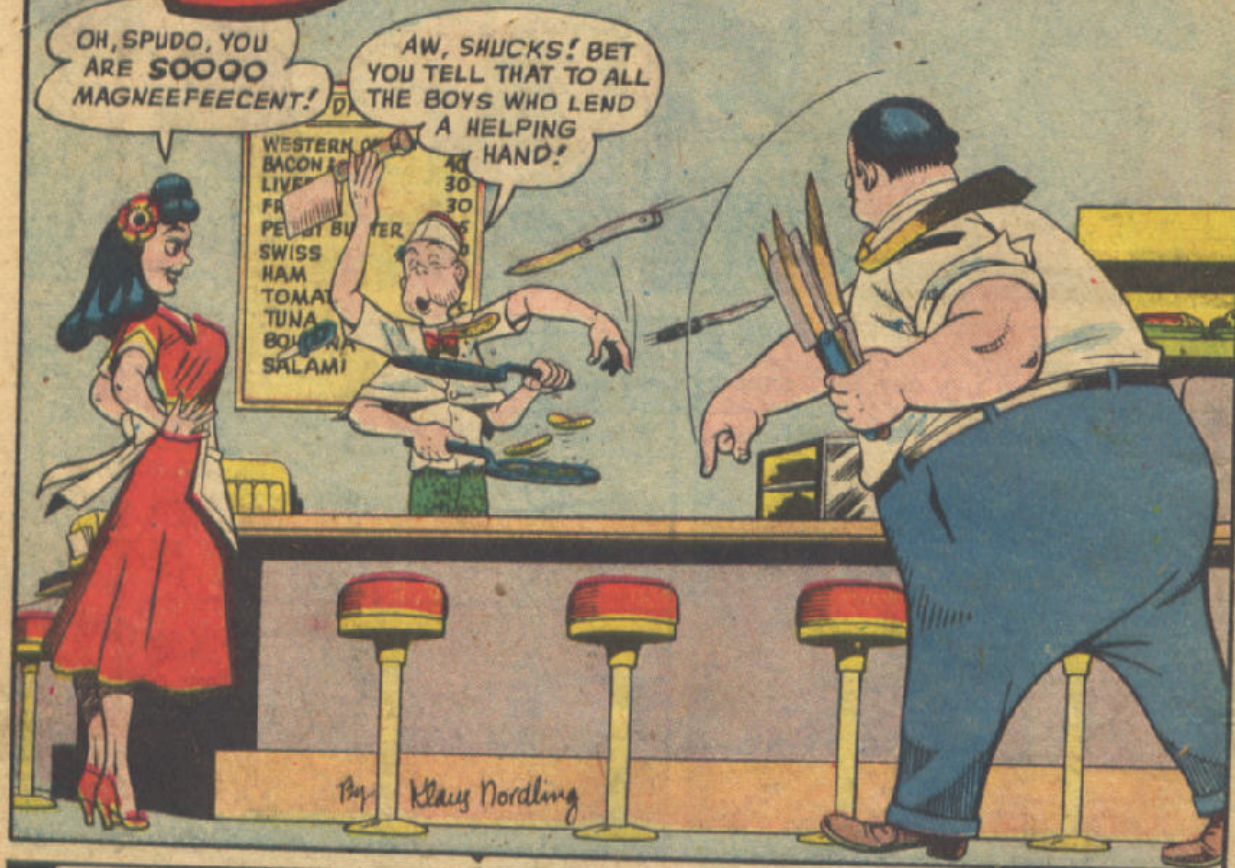
YAWP! IT'S  
HOT IN  
HERE!







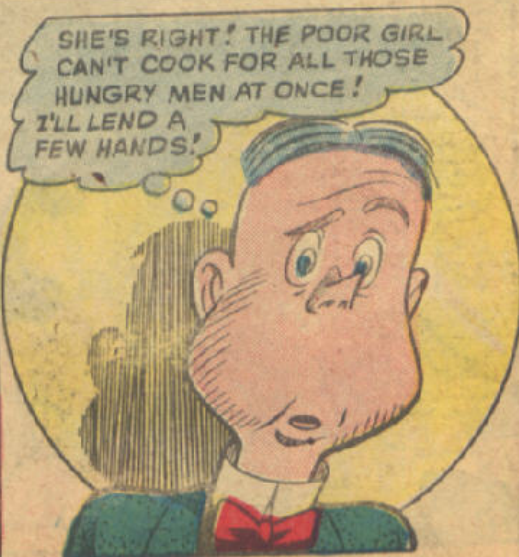
# SPUDO







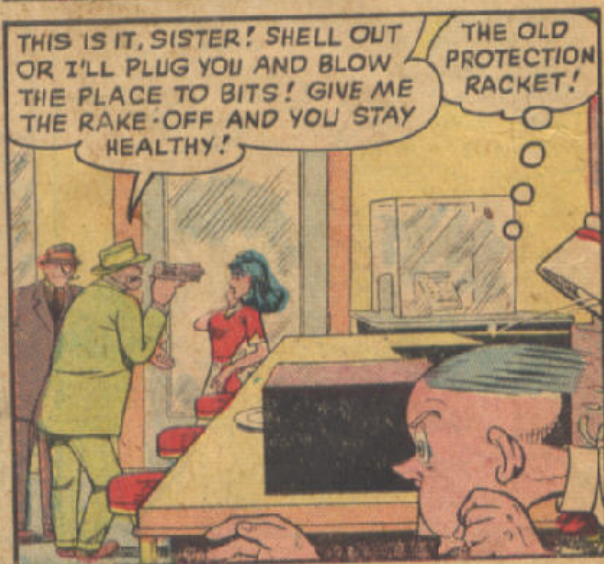
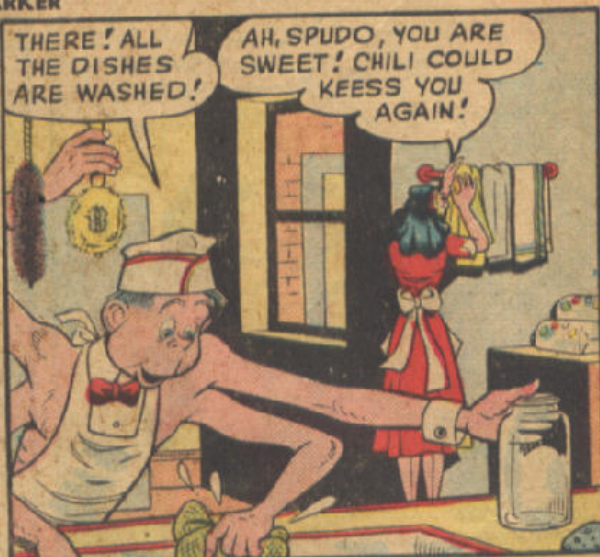
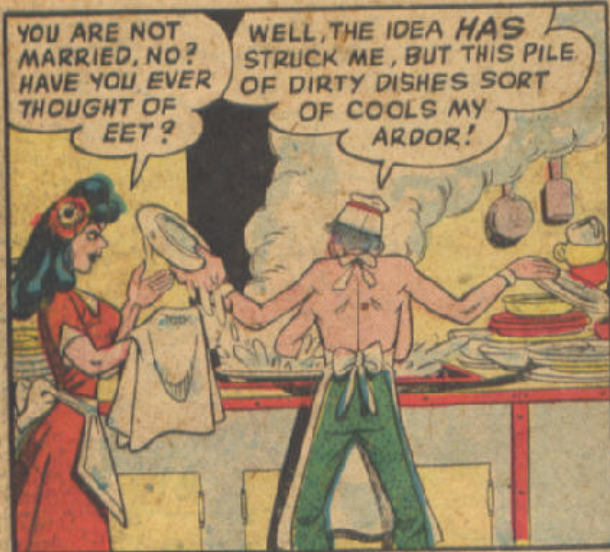




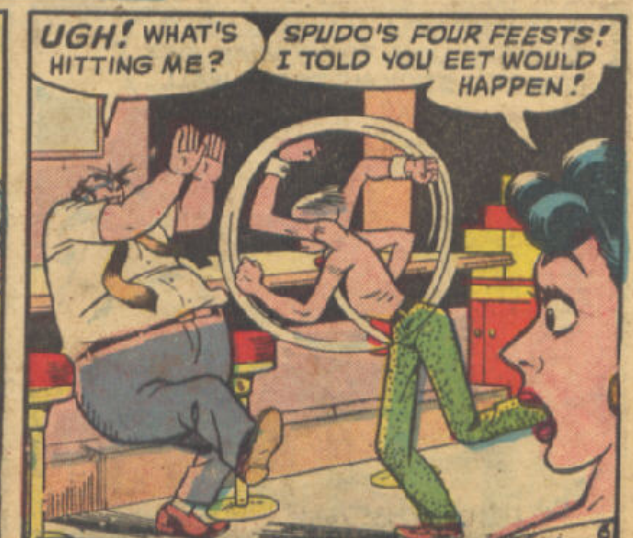
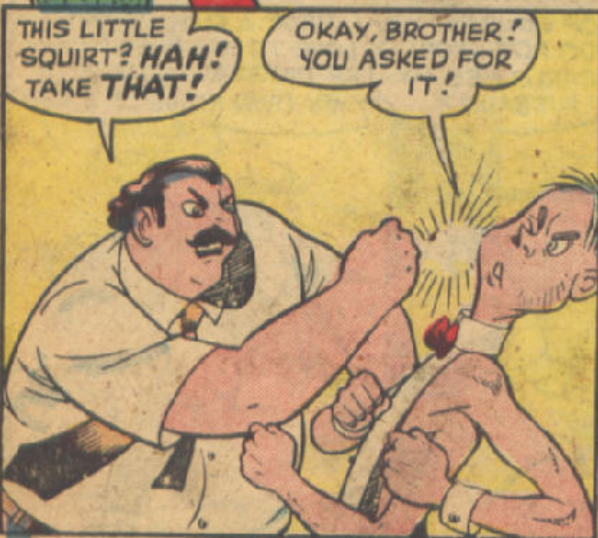
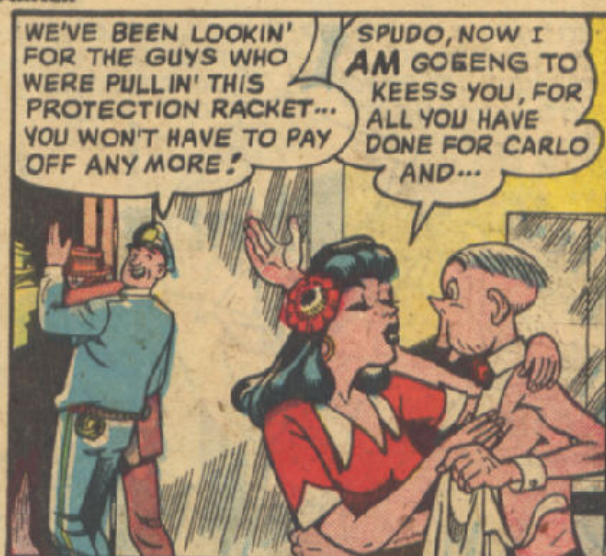
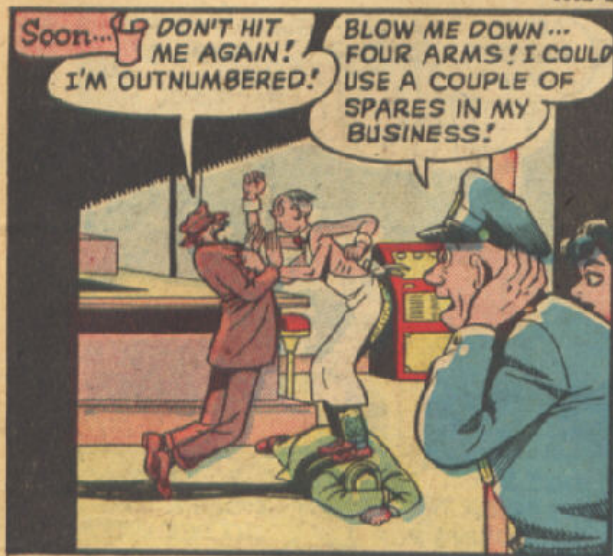






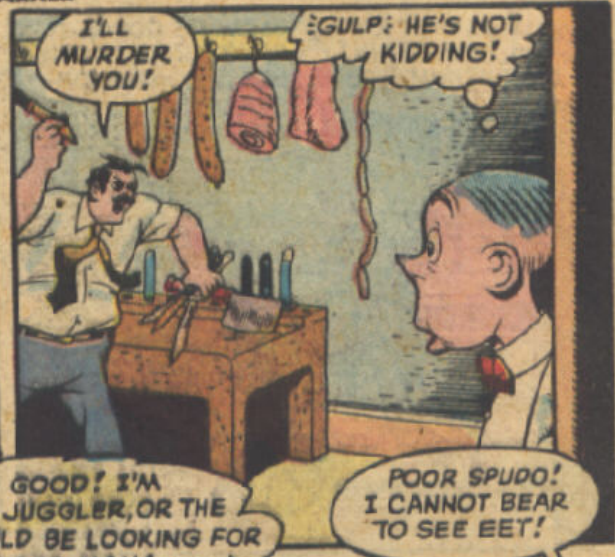




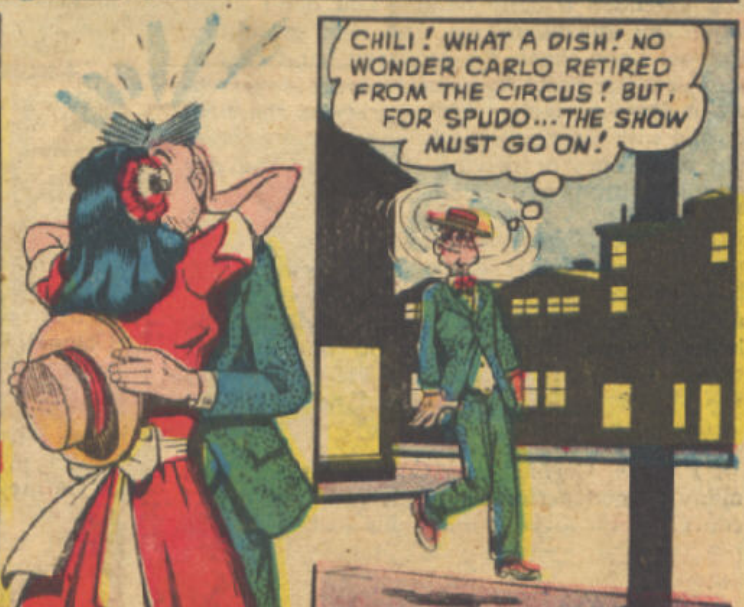
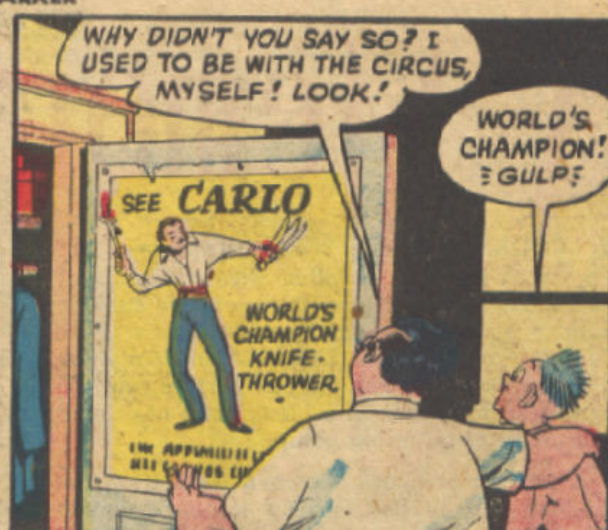




THE BARKER









# A Memorable Night

A COOL, mist-laden breeze swept over the circus grounds, bringing with it sounds of Lane's Mammoth Circus unloading for another one-day stand in a small, mid-western town. Near the ticket wagon, Colonel Lane, the owner, watched in the half-light of early dawn, the rapid transformation of a bleak piece of ground into a city of glittering pomp.

A tall, gaunt figure detached itself from the shadows and slipped silently to the Colonel's side. "Great sight, isn't it?" the Colonel boomed cheerfully.

"Yes," the man replied wistfully. "One of your performers said I'd find you here, Colonel Lane," he continued uncertainly. "I am Retento, Master of Memory. I'd like a job if you could see your way clear—" The tall man hesitated, letting his voice drift off hopelessly.

The Colonel regarded Retento with pity. A circus performer out of work was always certain of his sympathetic attention. In his many years as owner of Lane's Mammoth Circus, he had given aid to many such performers.

"Tell you what, Retento," the Colonel replied briskly, "you go over to the cook tent and get your breakfast. Then, we'll find a spot for you."

Retento straightened his stooped shoulders and extended a bony hand. "You don't know what this means to me," he said gratefully. Colonel Lane shook the proffered hand crisply, then sent the gaunt figure on his way. He watched as Retento picked his way across the field dotted with workmen busily engaged in tightening tent ropes or driving stakes into the dry ground with heavy wooden sledges.

Carnie Calahan, the show's barker, watched this tableau silently as he leaned against the ticket wagon. When Retento departed, he moved abruptly to the Colonel's side saying, "You know, Colonel, that big heart of yours is going to cause you trouble one of these days. Every has-been in the business knows Colonel Lane is a soft touch."

"I know, Carnie," the Colonel sighed, "but many a good performer needs just that help I can give him to put him on his feet again. I'm not the one to judge who's deserving at first glance."

"Yeah," Carnie said, "but look at the thanks

you get. You took Boris, the trapeze artist, in after Gigantic Shows folded, and right away he wants more money and top billing. Then there's McCoy, the driver of the roustabouts. He was a no-good bum when you gave him his chance, so now he acts like he owns the circus, not you. I tell you, Colonel, it just doesn't pay."

"They're both good men, Carnie," the Colonel protested, "you can't blame them—Eh! What was that?" A shrill scream from the menagerie tent cut into their conversation.

"Sounds like Shali," Carnie said tensely. "Maybe one of her pets has escaped." He sped off on a dead run, with the Colonel panting after him. When they reached the tent, a small knot of workmen and performers was gathered around a pale figure lying like a fallen puppet in the pool of light shed by a lantern held by one of the roustabouts.

"Break it up," Carnie ordered sharply, "and get back to work." He and the Colonel edged their way through the slowly dispersing crowd to the prostrate man. "You found him, Shali?" Carnie asked gently.

Shali, who stood to one side staring down in horror, nodded. "Yes, Carnie," she said in a shocked whisper. "I was coming over to see you and the Colonel about the way McCoy unloads my snakes. He throws them around so, that they're too nervous to perform."

"I tripped over him in the dark," she sobbed, gesturing toward the still form on the ground, "and when I called for a light, I saw him and screamed. Who is he?"

"His name's Retento," Carnie said quietly, "another of the Colonel's charity cases."

Carnie bent over the motionless Retento and took the limp hand in his own. He lifted him to a sitting position and said, "Give me a hand, Colonel. We can put him on the cot in the ticket wagon. Shali, you get the doctor."

"But, Carnie, the Colonel objected after Shali left, "this man is dead."

Carnie smiled grimly. Only we know that, Colonel, and I'm figuring that the murderer didn't have time to make sure." He nodded in the direction of a heavy wooden maul lying in the dust. "It looks as if the killer struck Retento, and, as he ran away, threw the mallet



## THE BARKER

back toward the body. Almost anyone in the circus could have done it, but the ground is so trampled, it's useless to look for clues."

"I hope you know what you're doing, Carnie," Colonel Lane said doubtfully. "This could get us into a lot of trouble with the police."

The two men easily carried Retento's frail body into the ticket wagon and laid him on the cot to the rear, which was sheltered by a canvas curtain. "If this works," Carnie promised, "you won't have to worry about the cops."

Both men glanced up as small, wiry Doctor Crowley came through the door, followed by Shali. "You better wait outside, Shali," Carnie said. The Colonel looked questioningly at Carnie, but said nothing.

"O.K., Carnie," the doctor said impatiently, looking up from Retento, "you know I can't bring a man back to life. This is a police matter. What's on your mind?"

"I want you to spread the word around," Carnie countered, "that this man will regain consciousness shortly and may name his attacker."

"Calahan," Dr. Crowley said in a shocked voice, "I can't do it."

"Do you want a murderer running loose," Carnie asked evenly, "or will you give us a chance to catch whoever did this?"

With a thoughtful frown, Dr. Crowley stared hard at Retento's face. "Just a moment, Carnie," he said, "I treated this man a year ago for a head wound when I was with Gigantic Shows. He had a memory act, but after his injury, he wasn't much good. I had to teach him like a child. He never really recovered, and he drifted away. As I recall, he lived near here. A nasty concussion, that."

Carnie followed the doctor's finger. A thin livid scar ran across Retento's forehead and into the hairline. "What caused it," Carnie asked, "a roustabout's wallet, maybe?"

"I thought it must have been some sort of metal clamp," Crowley replied. "Never did find out for sure. What with an accident that killed their star acrobat, Retento's injury, and a few other things, Gigantic folded shortly after. You know that; you took on some of their performers."

Carnie tugged at his lower lip thoughtfully. "What do you say, Doc? Will you play ball with us?"

"If it's O.K. with the Colonel," the doctor answered nervously, "but I still don't like it."

Colonel Lane nodded his assent, and, as the doctor left, he asked, "What now, Carnie?"

"We wait," Carnie said grimly, "for the murderer to hear Doc's report, and hope he gets jittery."

The two men hid themselves behind the curtain which bisected the wagon, and settled down for their vigil. After half an hour passed, the Colonel whispered, "Suppose the killer is too smart to come here?"

Carnie shook his head, placing a finger to his lips. "Listen," he hissed. The door of the ticket wagon opened to a slit, admitting a shaft of crimson light from the rising sun. Quietly, the door swung wide enough to admit a slim figure, then closed quickly.

The intruder glanced quickly about the dim interior and drew something from his belt. "Now, Retento," a voice said harshly, "we'll see if you regain consciousness after this." A knife glittered menacingly above the cot.

Carnie gathered his cramped legs under him and sprang silently, catching the arm of the visitor and wrenching it sharply. A painful gasp, and the knife clattered to the floor.

"Sorry to disappoint you, Boris," Carnie snarled, holding tightly to the startled trapeze artist's arm, "but you walked into a trap. Retento's already dead."

"I was a fool," Boris said sullenly, "but I had to make sure he wouldn't identify me."

"And tell us that you weakened your partner's trapeze at Gigantic Shows," Carnie added.

"He saw me getting rid of the broken trapeze and accused me of murder," Boris muttered, "so I hit him with the metal-bound end of the bar. I thought the fool was dead."

"You got a shock when you heard him ask for the Colonel this morning," Carnie continued, "but you trailed him and used a stake mallet, hoping McCoy would be blamed. All unnecessary, too. Retento wouldn't have recognized you."

"Why not, Barker?" Boris asked quickly.

"Because," Carnie answered, pushing the dazed Boris into the sunlight, "the first time you hit him with that trapeze bar, it destroyed his memory. Too bad you skipped out of Gigantic Shows before you could know that. Doc Crowley had to even tell Retento his own name."

After the sheriff arrested Boris and removed his victim, Colonel Lane walked slowly to the freak tent with the Barker. "You know," he said thoughtfully, "maybe I better take your advice, Carnie, and stop picking up odd characters."

"You couldn't, Colonel," Carnie grinned, "that's how you got me as your barker."



THE BARKER

# THE BARKER

LUCKY WHEELER'S  
~~GOLD LANE'S~~  
MAMMOTH CIRCUS

YES, FOLKS, LUCKY WHEELER'S CIRCUS IS NOT JUST AN ORDINARY CIRCUS WHERE YOU MERELY LOOK AT THINGS! ANYTHING YOU SEE HERE IS YOURS TO TAKE HOME IF A SPIN OF THE WHEEL BRINGS UP YOUR LUCKY NUMBER!

GOODY!  
MAYBE I  
CAN WIN  
HIM!



By Klaus Nordling



THE BARKER

LOOKS LIKE THE RAIN'LL NEVER STOP! I'VE NEVER BEEN THROUGH SO LONG A STRETCH OF BAD BUSINESS!

THE WEATHER'S KEPT THEM AWAY IN DROVES, ALL RIGHT!

LET'S GO INTO TOWN AND GET A GOOD DINNER! IT'LL MAKE THINGS LOOK A LITTLE BRIGHTER!

I'LL EAT, CARNIE, BUT I DON'T EXPECT TO GET CHEERFUL!

YOU MAY AS WELL KNOW WHERE WE STAND, CARNIE... I WON'T BE ABLE TO PAY BILLS AND SALARIES THE END OF THIS WEEK!

WHEW! THAT IS BAD!

CIRCUS EXPENSES RUN HIGH! A SPELL OF BAD LUCK AND THE WOLF'S AT THE DOOR.

WE'LL MANAGE SOMEHOW!

I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, BUT I DON'T SEE HOW I CAN GET MY HANDS ON SOME MONEY BEFORE THE WEEK'S OVER!

YEAH! THAT WON'T BE EASY, I GUESS!

TAURANT

AH! WHAT'S THIS?

THAT'S AN IDEA! I'VE GOT A FEW BUCKS I MIGHT BE ABLE TO PARLAY INTO A BANK-ROLL!

Give Dame Fortune a chance to be kind to you!  
GAMBLING EVERY NIGHT... at LUCKY WHEELERS 23 FRONT ST.



IT ISN'T LIKELY, COLONEL! THE HOUSE ALWAYS WINS IN THOSE JOINTS!

I MAY AS WELL BE BROKE AS HAVE WHAT I'VE GOT IN MY POCKETS, CARNIE! LET'S GIVE IT A WHIRL!



GREETINGS, BOYS! I'M LUCKY WHEELER, THE LAD WHO SPREADS HIS LUCK AROUND AMONG THE CUSTOMERS! YES SIR, A BREAK FOR EVERY SUCKER! THAT'S MY MOTTO! DO COME IN!



A LITTLE ROULETTE TONIGHT, GENTLEMEN? THE TABLE'S HOT! YES SIREE!

SUITS ME!



A LITTLE ROOM FOR MY FRIEND, MR. ...ER... WHAT WAS THE NAME?

LANE! COLONEL LANE!



NOT COLONEL LANE, THE OWNER OF COLONEL LANE'S MAMMOTH CIRCUS! WELL, I AM HONORED!

THANKS!



COLONEL, I'LL STAND RIGHT HERE AND BRING YOU LUCK! YES SIR! SPECIAL ATTENTION FOR DISTINGUISHED GUESTS! THAT'S ANOTHER LUCKY WHEELER SLOGAN! PLACE YOUR BETS, GENTLEMEN!

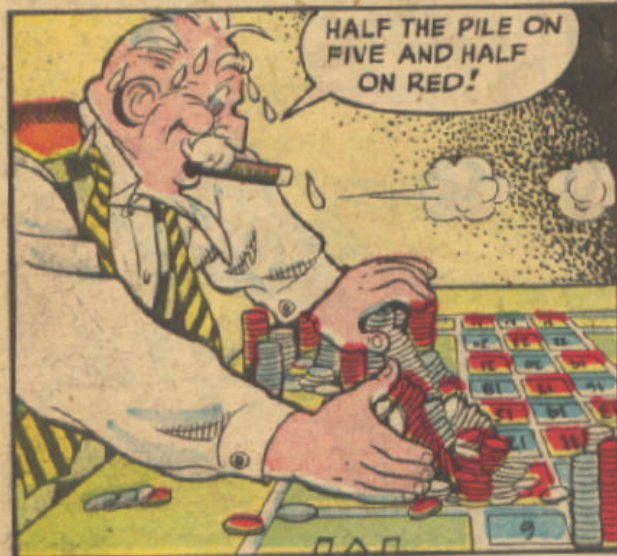
TEN ON FIVE AND TEN ON RED!



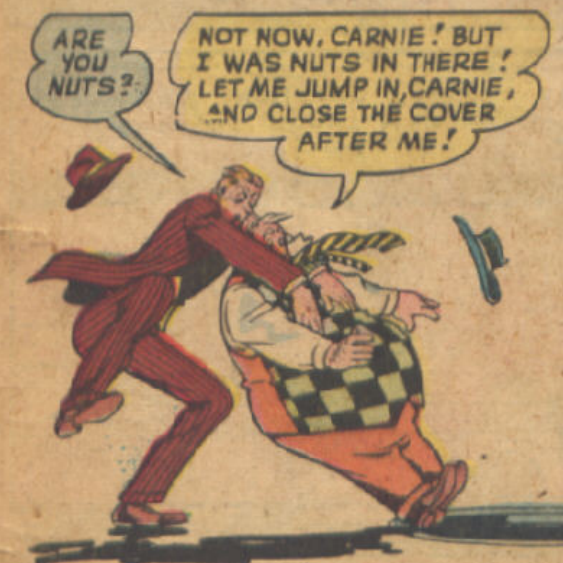
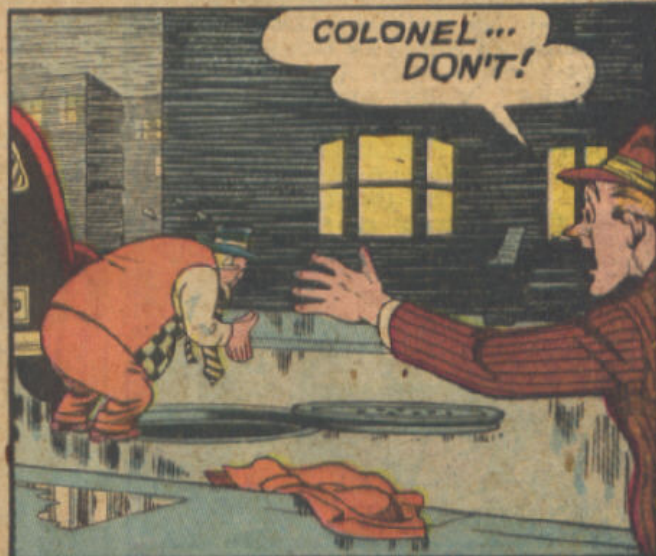




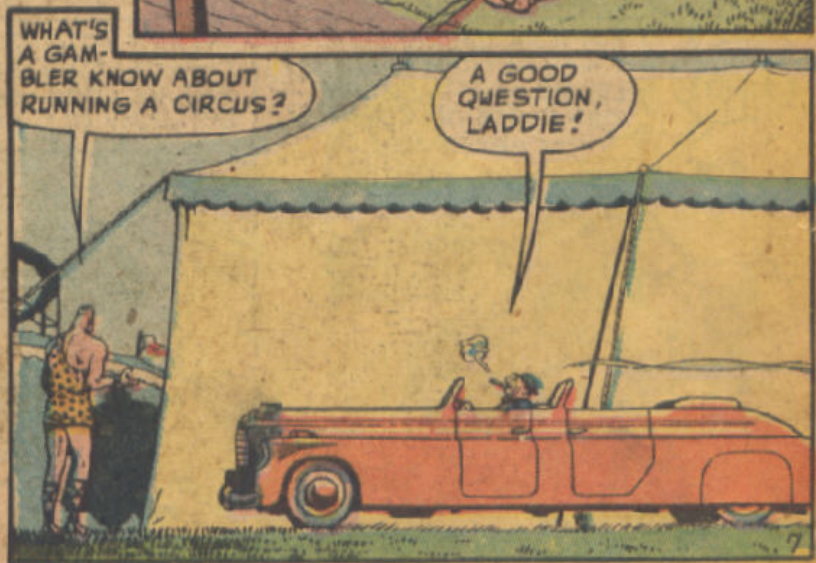
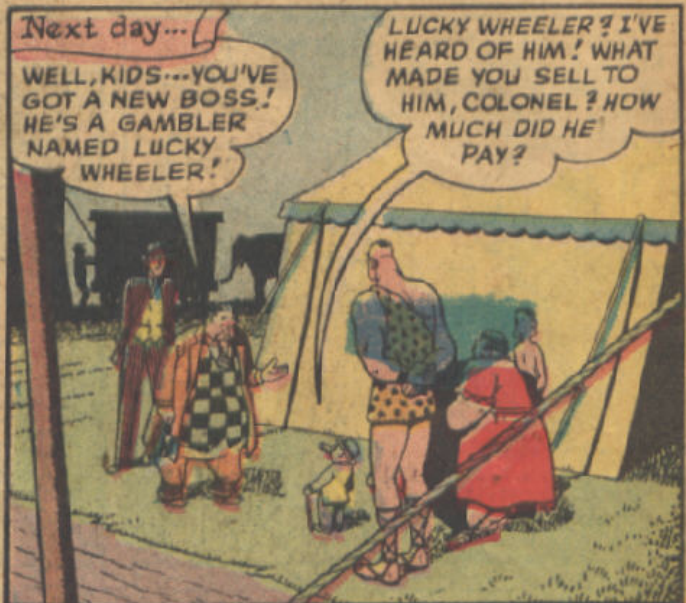
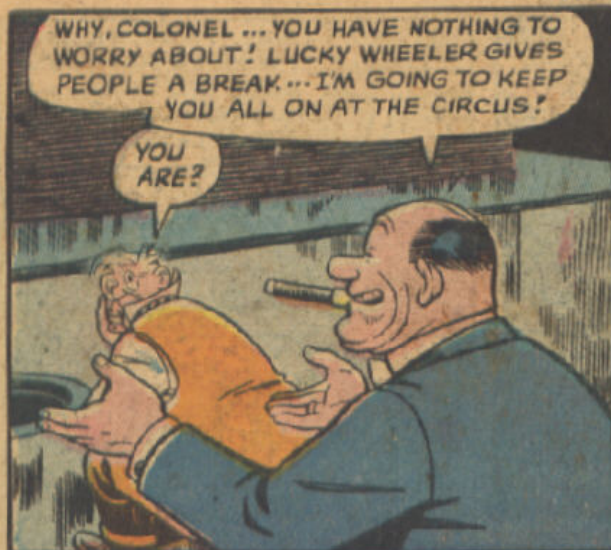




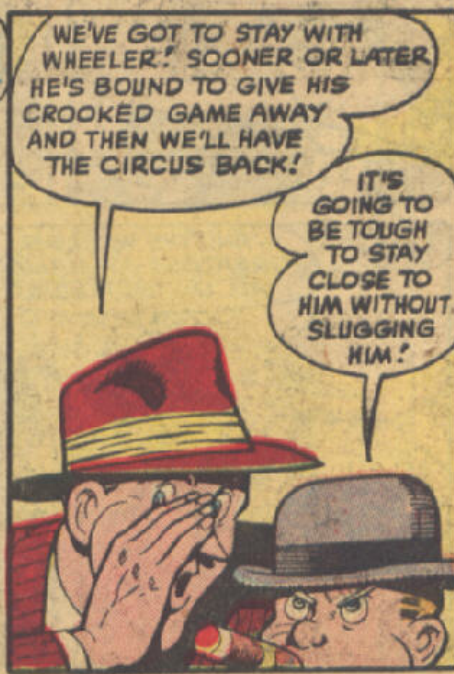
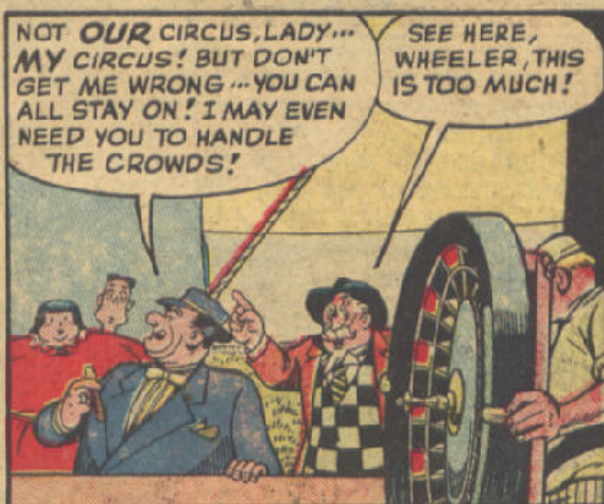
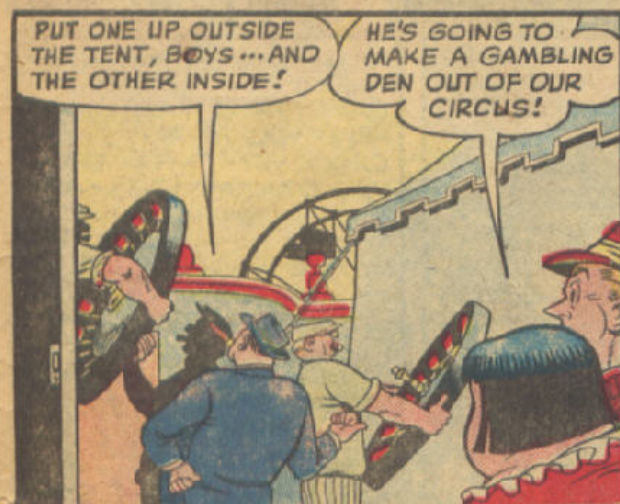














NOW GET THIS, YOU MUGGS... IF YOU FRONT FOR ME, YOU EAT! IF YOU DON'T, OUT YOU GO! I'M NOT CHANGING THE NAME OF THE CIRCUS AND I'M NOT CHANGING ANYTHING ELSE THAT THE COPS CAN NOTICE RIGHT AWAY!



YOU GIVE YOUR USUAL BARKER'S PITCH! ALL THE ACTS GO ON AS BEFORE... BUT I'M GOING TO LET THE RUBES WITH GAMBLING BLOOD KNOW THAT THEY CAN TRY THEIR LUCK ON THE INSIDE!



THAT ROULETTE WHEEL SHOULD AROUSE THEIR CURIOSITY AND GIVE THEM THE ITCH TO PLAY! WITH THOUSANDS OF RUBES ON HAND I'LL MAKE MY HAIL BEFORE THE COPS GET WISE!



I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE TO PUT THIS WHEEL, MEN!

I FEEL LIKE A CROOK ALREADY!



WE'LL PLAY WHEELER'S GAME! THERE NEVER WAS A CROOK YET WHO COULDN'T BE TRIPPED UP SOONER OR LATER!

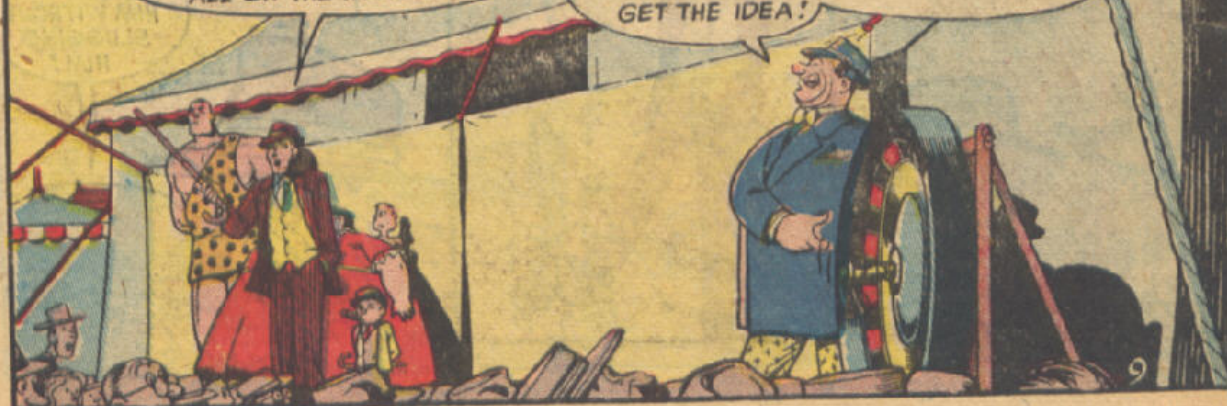
NOW THE SUN COMES OUT! AND LOOK AT IT SHINE! IT'LL BRING THE LAMBS TO THAT WOLF BY THE THOUSANDS!



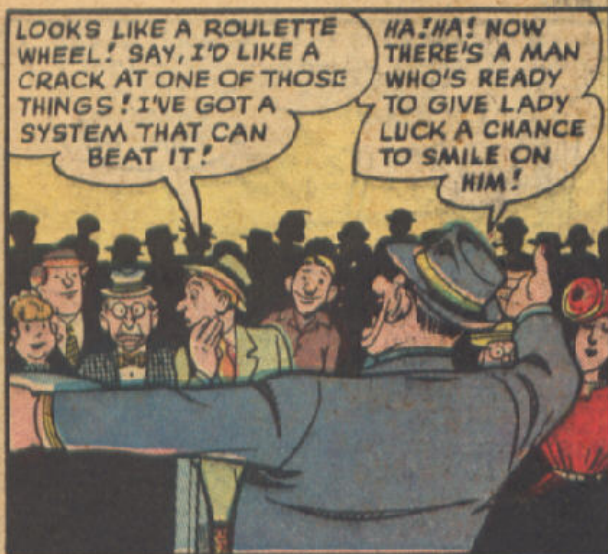
Later...

.. AND THE WORLD'S GREATEST ANIMAL ACTS, ALL ON THE INSIDE!

HEH, HEH! THERE'S ALSO SOMETHING EXTRA, FOLKS! IF YOU'LL TAKE A LOOK AT THIS BEE-DOOTIFUL WHEEL YOU'LL GET THE IDEA!

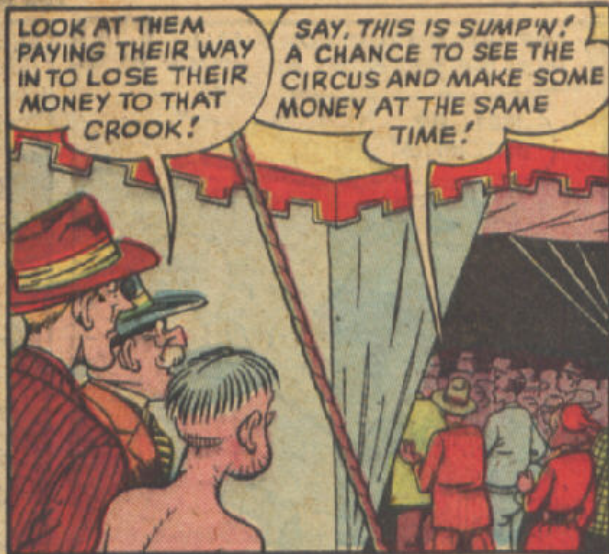






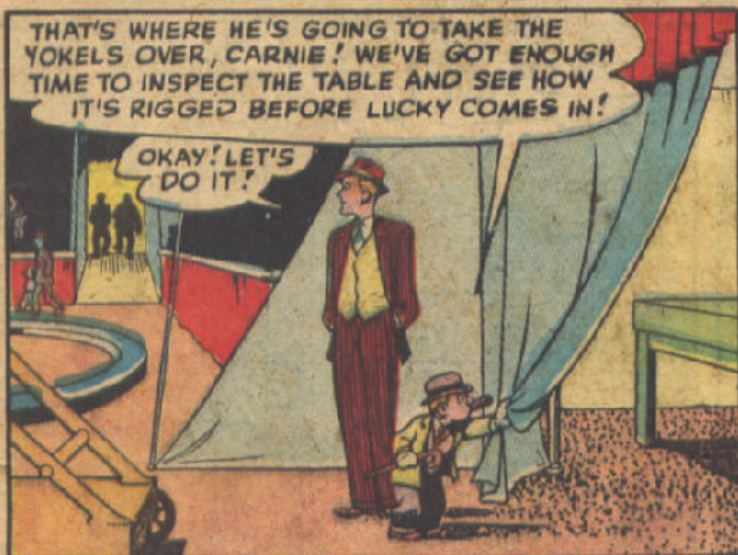
LOOKS LIKE A ROULETTE WHEEL! SAY, I'D LIKE A CRACK AT ONE OF THOSE THINGS! I'VE GOT A SYSTEM THAT CAN BEAT IT!

HA! HA! NOW THERE'S A MAN WHO'S READY TO GIVE LADY LUCK A CHANCE TO SMILE ON HIM!



LOOK AT THEM PAYING THEIR WAY INTO TO LOSE THEIR MONEY TO THAT CROOK!

SAY, THIS IS SUMP'N! A CHANCE TO SEE THE CIRCUS AND MAKE SOME MONEY AT THE SAME TIME!



THAT'S WHERE HE'S GOING TO TAKE THE YOKELS OVER, CARNIE! WE'VE GOT ENOUGH TIME TO INSPECT THE TABLE AND SEE HOW IT'S RIGGED BEFORE LUCKY COMES IN!

OKAY! LET'S DO IT!



IT LOOKS ALL RIGHT DOWN HERE!

EVERYTHING ON TOP SEEMS TO BE ON THE LEVEL, TOO!



STAY OUT OF THERE, YOU TWO! WHAT WERE YOU TRYING TO DO... SEE IF THE WHEEL WAS RIGGED?

COULD BE!



WHY, YOU LITTLE MUTT, THE DAY HASN'T ARRIVED WHEN YOU CAN PIN ANYTHING ON LUCKY WHEELER!

I'LL...



YOU'LL DO NOTHING, WHEELER... AND DON'T FORGET IT!

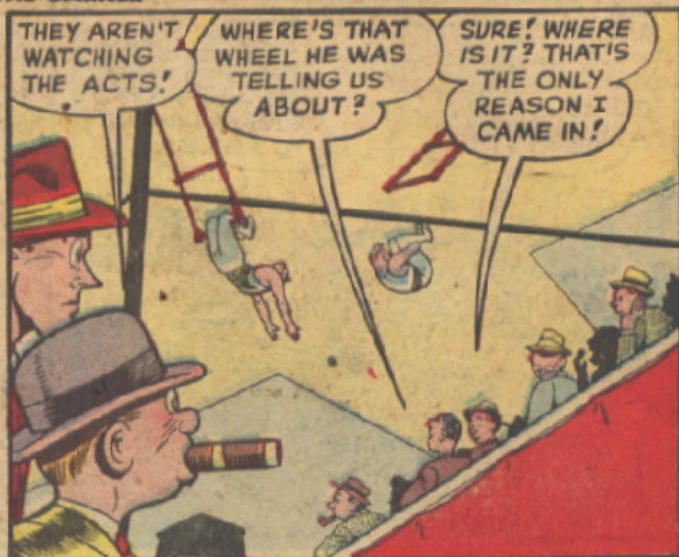
OUCH!





I'VE GOT NO TIME FOR SMALL-FRY LIKE YOU NOW! BUT WATCH OUT!

WE'LL BE WATCHING!



THEY AREN'T WATCHING THE ACTS!

WHERE'S THAT WHEEL HE WAS TELLING US ABOUT?

SURE! WHERE IS IT? THAT'S THE ONLY REASON I CAME IN!



ALL RIGHT, FOLKS! THE TREAT I PROMISED YOU IS ABOUT TO BEGIN! STEP THIS WAY... AND DON'T CROWD!



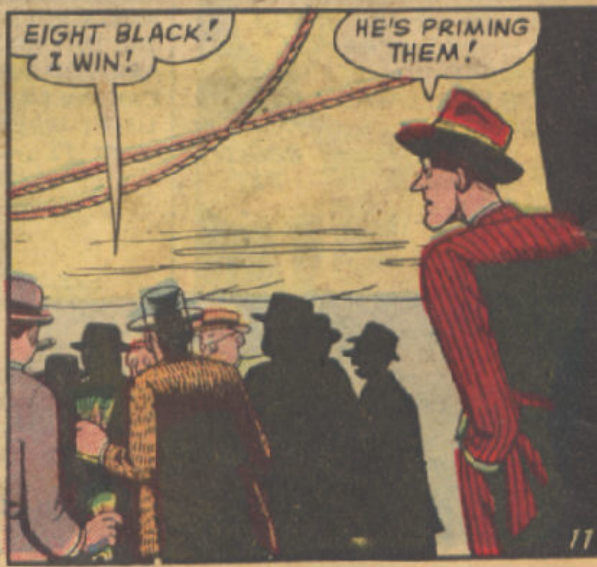
LUCKY'S LETTING IN ANYBODY WHO WANTS TO COME IN...

HE'S GOING TO CLEAN THEM ALL!



BUT HE MUST REALIZE THERE COULD BE A DETECTIVE IN THE CROWD... IF HE'S WILLING TO RISK THAT, IT MEANS HE'S OUT TO MAKE ONE BIG HAUL AND QUIT...

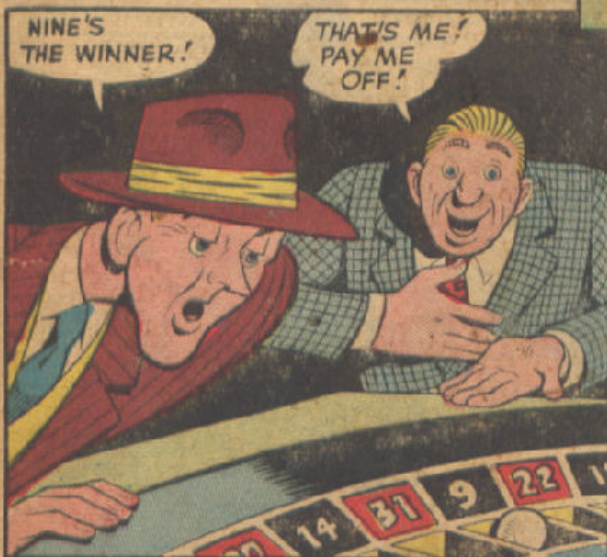
YEAH, AND A COUPLE OF SORE LOSERS MIGHT TAKE IT OUT ON THE CIRCUS AND WRECK THE PLACE!



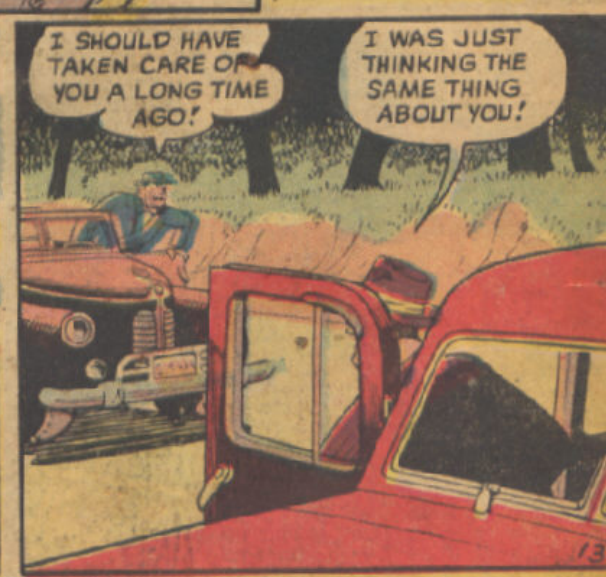
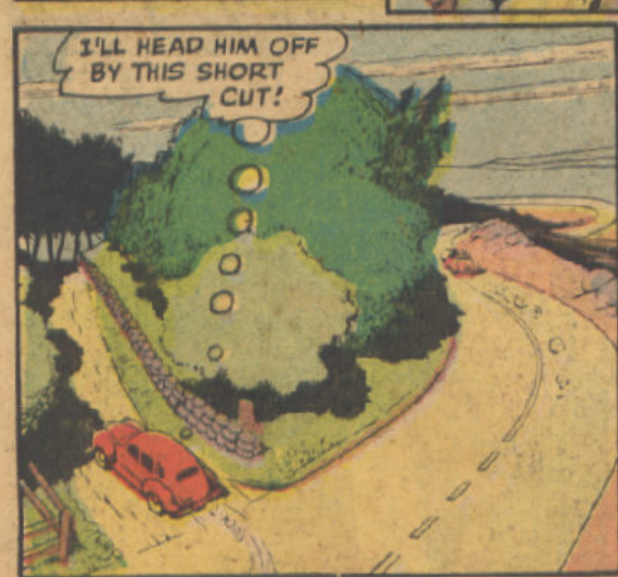
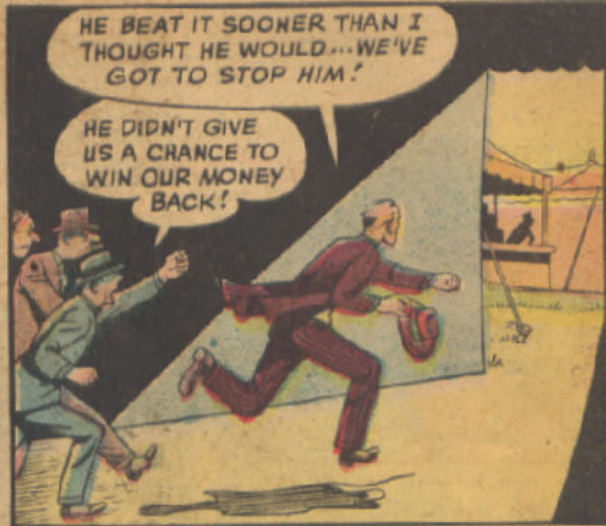
EIGHT BLACK! I WIN!

HE'S PRIMING THEM!















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at a party . . . introduce

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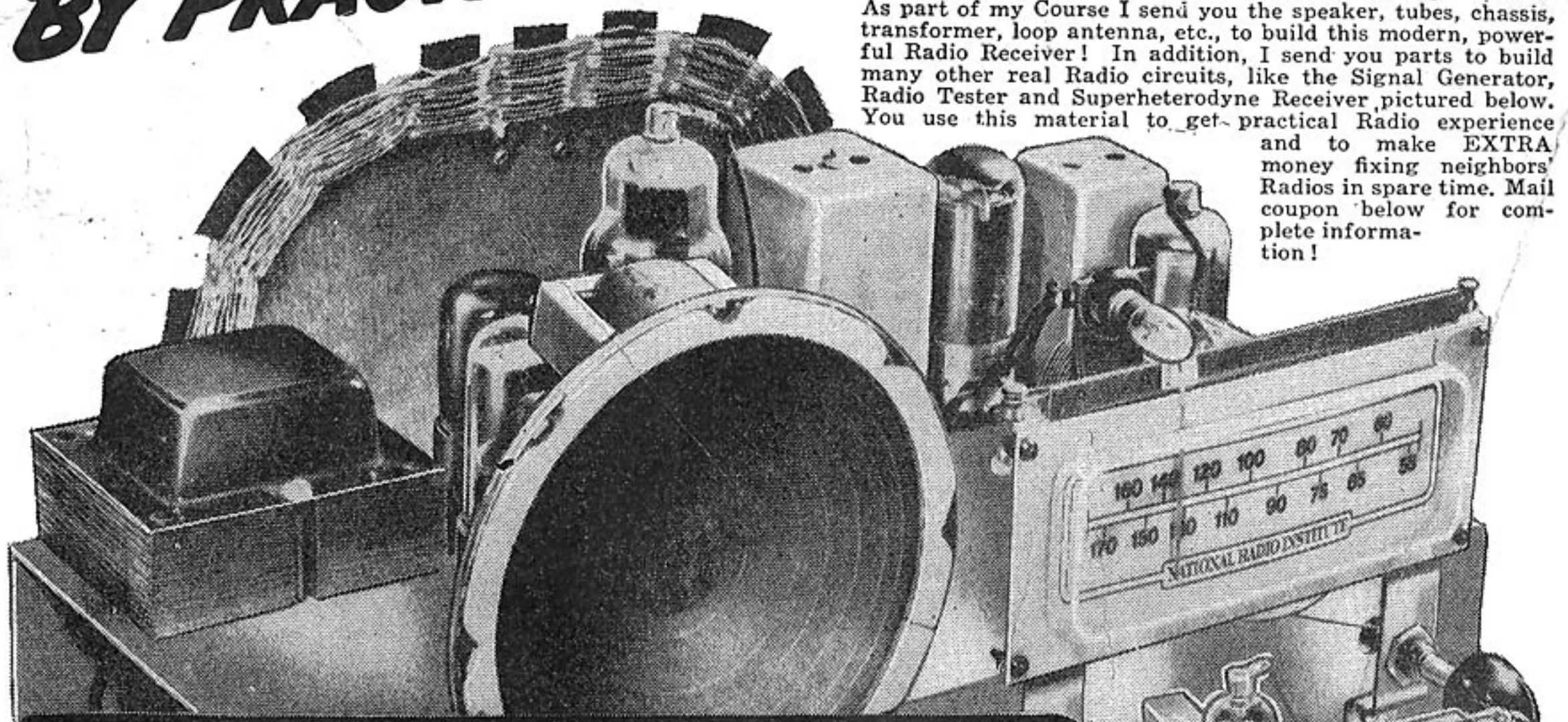
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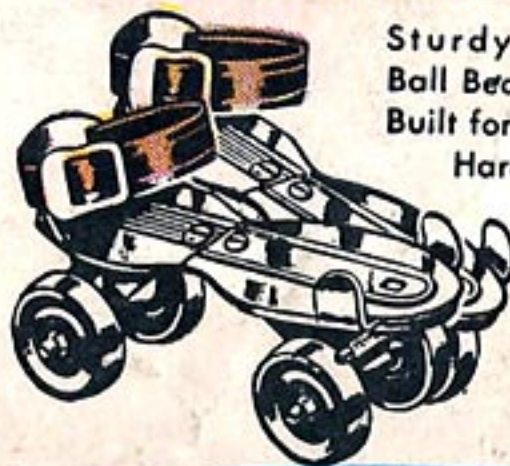
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